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HEALTH ALERT: 2009 H1N1 Influenza (Swine Flu) Interim Guidelines for Businesses

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This is a rapidly evolving situation, and this alert provides interim guidance. The St. Louis County Department of Health will issue further guidance as more information becomes available.

The World Health Organization has raised the pandemic influenza alert level to five, meaning that the 2009 H1N1 influenza (swine flu) virus has widespread human-to-human transmission.

There appears to be human-to-human spread of these viruses. **Staff presenting with influenza-like illness (fever with cough or sore throat) should be advised to stay home at least 7 calendar days.** If a staff member presents with influenza-like illness AND has traveled to an area where swine flu is confirmed or is a contact to a known case please contact the Saint Louis County Department of Health at 314-615-1636.

Case Definition:

- Fever of ≥ 37.8 degrees C (100 degrees F) plus cough or sore throat
AND
- Travel to an area where swine flu is confirmed or contact to a known case

How to Stop the Spread:

There is no vaccine available right now to protect against swine flu. There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:

- **Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze.** Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- **Wash your hands often with soap and water**, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.** Germs spread this way.
- **Avoid face-to-face contact less than 6 feet away**, especially sick individuals.
- **Keep Workspaces Clean.** Just like at home, make sure you sanitize surfaces such as desktops, phones, and computer keyboards.
- **If you get sick with influenza-like illness, CDC recommends that you stay home from work at least 7 days and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.**

Preparing Your Business for Pandemic Flu:

- **Develop a Disaster Plan:** Think about how a pandemic flu could affect your employees, customers and workplace. Consider how your business would operate if a large portion of your staff were home sick. If your business needs help creating a pandemic plan, local resources are available.

- The Red Cross partners with [PandemicPrep.org](http://www.pandemicprep.org), a St. Louis-based group that specifically focuses on planning for pandemic illnesses. Their website includes online templates for creating a pandemic plan.
- Additionally, the Red Cross St. Louis Area Chapter has created the [Ready Rating Program](#) to guide any business, organization, or school through the steps of getting prepared in any emergency.

Additional resources for the latest information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/swineflu/>

<http://www.stlouisco.com/doh/>

http://www.dhss.mo.gov/BT_Response/SwineFlu09.html